

Democratic Radio Address

Bartlett says, We've Been Sold a False Bill of Goods

Here in Maine we are pretty straight forward people. We will tell you what we think; and we expect the same in return. We're honest. Hard working. We believe in a fair day's pay for an honest day's work. And even though we're often too proud to ask for help, we have a keen eye for spotting a neighbor in need—and we'll be right there to lend a helping hand.

Good Morning. I'm State Senator Phil Bartlett of Gorham. I was born and raised a Mainer. And even though I went away to college, I came back to Maine because I can't imagine living anywhere else. I love the Maine-way. Our no non-sense approach to life is unmatched anywhere else.

We're practical. We want things to work. If it's broken, we fix it.

We're humble and honest. We admit our mistakes.

These qualities exist in our neighborhoods and on Main Streets; in our schools and on our playgrounds and even—at our town hall meetings. But lately they've been missing in Augusta.

Sadly the political culture in Maine over the last two years has shifted dramatically. As more time goes by and more examples pile up, we're learning that we can't necessarily trust what we're hearing from Governor Paul LePage and Republican leaders. Aside from the gaffes and slips of tongue, there have been too many examples where the facts don't back up their claims.

Here's what I mean:

Governor LePage and his Republican allies promise jobs. Yet under their leadership, we now rank 45th in the nation in job creation. We've lost more than 1,500 jobs and currently there are 53,000 Mainers out of work.

Let's be clear. There have been opportunities to get people back to work but Governor LePage and the Republican majority have looked the other way. By refusing to issue bonds—already approved by Maine voters, the Governor and Treasurer are holding jobs hostage. These are real opportunities that will provide good paying jobs to Maine people today.

Governor LePage and his Republican allies promise to grow an economy where "all citizens prosper." Yet on LePage's watch: our New England neighbors have passed us by. While their economies are growing, ours is the only state whose economy actually shrank. Every other state in the country is seeing their income grow—Maine ranks dead last.

Governor LePage says he wants to give Mainers more affordable health care and will “fight special interests.” Yet, Republicans spearheaded an insurance overhaul that is nothing more than a race to the bottom in health care. Mainers are now paying more for less. This plan has increased premiums for more than 50% of Maine people—hurting middle aged Mainers the most. And 90% of our small businesses are paying more too—especially those with businesses in rural parts of the state and with older workers.

What’s worse, this harmful law imposes a new \$22 million dollar tax that is paid by all Maine insurance holders. And while we all pay more, insurance companies have seen an increase in their profits of \$1.8 million dollars. This is special interest politics at its worst.

Who are Republicans really fighting for?

Governor LePage and the Republican majority promise tax incentives for the job creators. But, let’s look at the math:

If you’re a successful small business that nets \$100,000 dollars in profit after paying all your expenses, you get \$550 more dollars in your pocket. Republicans are telling you that is enough money to get you to create more jobs and invest in your business. Make no mistake, an extra \$550 is a nice check, but it’s not going to allow a business to hire anybody and it will not lead to significant new investment in that business. Recently a small business owner told me he’d benefit a lot more by the state, building the roads and bridges we need, invest in workforce training programs, and funding public education to help manage our property taxes.

It seems the policies of Governor LePage and the Republican majority have made it harder to live and work in this state. They’ve sold us a false bill of goods. They’ve promised one thing but have delivered something else.

It’s time those in charge in Augusta, Governor LePage and his allies, are held accountable for what they are really doing.

Thank you for listening. This is State Senator Phil Bartlett of Gorham. Have a great weekend!